

AUSTRALIAN MULTICULTURALISM PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

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AUSTRALIAN MULTICULTURALISM – PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Introduction and Contextual Background

The advent of multiculturalism, not just as an aspect of Australian public policy, but also as a social ideal, ranks as a notable experiment of social engineering. It is a truism, nevertheless, to say that this social ideal has been under critical public scrutiny for sometime. It is certainly a contested notion which has a range of supporters and critics drawn from all sides of the political spectrum. In this context, the key proposition I would like to argue is that the problematic nature of multiculturalism as a contested notion of public policy, arises from two alternative ways of conceptualising multiculturalism as it has been understood in Australian society: as a philosophy of migrant settlement catering to the needs of newcomers through public policies designed to help their integration into the socio cultural structures of Australian society; the other views normative multiculturalism as a constitutive principle of the Australian nation, one which is central to how we regard ourselves as being Australian in a multicultural nation, i.e., as Australian citizens in a diverse and plural society. In other words, how do we as citizens in a liberal democracy deal with difference in giving expression to our membership of a political community, i.e., in expressing a sense of Australian identity.

This Paper endeavours to identify some of the key issues underlying this dilemma of Australian multiculturalism in public policy, by providing a critical overview of the way in which the philosophy and practice of multiculturalism has evolved since its formulation in the Whitlam era (1972-75). This analysis enables us to consider the future prospects of Australian multiculturalism not only in managing, but also confronting diversity in Australian society. But first, we need to place Australian multiculturalism in a historical context to gain a better understanding of its genesis as a social ideal. As a settler society, immigration has been a constant theme since 1788, and the origins of multiculturalism lie firmly embedded in the vault of Australia's history. Throughout waves of migration over the years, especially following the post World War II mass migration, there has been in Australian immigration policy a strong link between policies of recruitment and settlement (Woden et al. 1990).

The conjunction of recruitment and settlement policies was uppermost in the minds of the Founding Fathers of Federation, and was central to the ideas that went to build the

concept of an Australian nation at the time of Federation. For this reason, Australian migration and recruitment policies were based on the expectation of permanent settlement. By proclaiming the *IR Act of 1901* (more popularly known as the White Australia policy) as its first Act of Federation, the new Federal Parliament made clear that immigration would be a Commonwealth responsibility and also indicated its firm resolve and commitment to preserve racial and cultural homogeneity (Jayasuriya et al. 2003).

Accordingly, a key feature of the philosophy of settlement from the 19th century onward was that migrants should assimilate to the culture and mores of a society conceived of as an ‘anglo fragment’ society (Hartz 1964). The term ‘anglo fragment’, used to describe settler societies of Anglo Celtic origin (e.g., New Zealand, USA and Canada), denotes that these societies are deeply embedded in their colonial heritage as a British colony. This is vividly reflected in the institutional forms and practices of settler societies, all of which are informed by the ideological temper characteristic of the mother country at the time the ‘fragment’ detaches from the whole (i.e., the new society).

In these anglo fragment societies the ideological traditions, grafted from the mother country on to the new settler societies, have become frozen over time, and deeply embedded in the psyche of settler societies like Australia. Thus, it is argued by some that ‘English cultural values and attitudes [which] shaped settler dominant group perceptions and attitudes towards other groups’ (Barker 1983) constitute the core culture of Australian society. Thus, attitudes and sentiments surrounding immigration and settlement, originating from the 19th century became embodied as the core culture of Australia as an ‘anglo fragment’ society, and consolidated during the first five decades of the 20th century. This ideology of migration legitimated the 19th century racist attitudes and the overwhelming need for ‘anglo conformity’ which were firmly ingrained in all aspects of Australian society, and, indeed, remain intractable to this day. In short, the ‘fragment’ notion helps to delimit the context and boundaries within which Australian attitudes to diversity and pluralism have evolved over time.

Whatever the limitations of this point of view, the ‘fragment’ notion illuminates the social and political ideas and institutional forms and practices, e.g., of anglo conformity, that have characterised Australian society, and influenced its institutional response to diversity (e.g., liberal political values of citizenship and equality). In short, these historical traditions established a strong nexus between race, nation and culture, and constituted the building blocks of Australian nationalism which were in the forefront at

the time of Federation. It is this sense of nationalism and national identity which has been re-ignited and promoted by some conservative theorists and also by Hansonism.

Multiculturalism from Whitlam to Howard: An Overview

The earlier historical links, especially the conjunction between migrant recruitment and settlement policies, were fractured and transformed by changes in immigration policy that took place in the post World War II period of mass migration (Burnley 2001). How did this come about? Public discourse about immigration, subsumed under the slogan 'populate or perish', was heavily influenced, among other considerations, by one formidable factor. The logic of Australian capitalism in the post World War II phase of economic growth which decreed that the much needed labour for the nascent manufacturing sector had to be sought from countries other than Britain, the traditional source of immigrants since settlement. This new policy ethos signalled a major shift in recruitment policy with the intake of non British European labour, mainly southern European, and heralded the end of the exclusionary and selective tradition of migration intake of giving preference to British subjects.

As regards settlement, these policies were still linked to a policy of anglo conformity in terms of the doctrine of assimilationism, that is, the view that if immigrants came to Australia for whatever reason, then they had to become a part of the dominant culture. The latter was dubbed WASP, because newcomers were expected to conform to the values and life styles of white anglo-saxon Protestants (WASP). Nevertheless, it was clear by the late 1960s that these policies of hardline assimilationism were dysfunctional and that the social costs were far too great a burden to bear. In short, the structural and cultural alienation of migrants from mainstream society appeared to invalidate the doctrine of assimilationism as an effective philosophy of settlement (Castles et al. 1992).

With the abandoning of hardline assimilationist policies, one of the main pillars of settlement policies—anglo conformity as the basis of preserving cultural homogeneity—collapsed. The other pillar, viz., the need for racial homogeneity, was removed only with the formal rescinding of the 'White Australia' policy by the Whitlam Government in 1973 (Jayasuriya & Kee Poo Kong 1999). This non discriminatory policy ethos was also greatly strengthened by the passing of the *Racial Discrimination Act* in 1975, and helped to introduce a new philosophy of settlement which departed sharply from traditional policies. The new philosophy of migrant settlement which emerged in the Whitlam era was directed towards accommodating the strong social and

cultural diversity evident in Australian society in the 1970s as a result of mass migration in the post World War II period. These policy changes were effected partly as a response to community pressures against hardline assimilationism (Lopez 2000; CCR 1975).

This new policy ethos signified the emergence of the doctrine of cultural pluralism which ensured the ‘preservation of the communal life and significant patterns of the culture’ (Gordon 1981) of immigrant groups within the host society. The term, ‘multiculturalism’ was, in fact, a shorthand way of describing cultural pluralism. In passing, it is worth noting that the manner in which these policy changes were carried out reflect the utilitarian pragmatism of Australian society, a characteristic of the Australian political culture, which Hugh Collins (1995) perceptively terms as an expression of ‘Benthamite society’.

The core of the ideology of multiculturalism owes much to Al Grassby, the Minister of Immigration (1972-75) who was responsible for ushering in these changes. Grassby (1973), through his notion of ‘family of nations’ encouraged migrant groups to cultivate cultural difference in terms of their ethnicity, understood as a ‘sense of peoplehood’, symbolised by a common culture based on a way of life, national or racial origin, or religion. The trade-off was that migrants were no longer regarded as aliens, but accepted as citizens who were governed by the dictates of Australian citizenship (Jordens 1997). In other words, multiculturalism as a philosophy of settlement was predicated on the acceptance by newcomers of the duties or responsibilities associated with the acceptance of the rights of citizenship. As Keating (2000) expressed in reaffirming his commitment to the ideology of multiculturalism: ‘all Australians must accept the basic principles of Australian society’ [which he identified] as the constitution and the rule of law, parliamentary democracy, freedom of speech and religion, English as the national language, equality of the sexes, and tolerance (Keating (2000: 262).

From its origin in the Whitlam era,¹ cultural pluralism was clearly promoted as the public rationale for migrant settlement and linked to the idea of a common citizenship. This was what guaranteed a ‘fair go’ for the newcomers by recognizing that all legal immigrants were no longer treated as ‘aliens’. As citizens they were formally entitled to the rights and benefits of citizenship—the only exception being that non citizens who had only permanent residency status were denied certain rights such as voting. The

1. Mark Lopez (2000), in his pathfinding study of the history of multiculturalism has provided an excellent authentic account of the events surrounding the emergence of multiculturalism in the Whitlam era.

limitation imposed on the manifestation of ‘difference’ by new comers, was the key to their social integration into the ‘existing societal culture and came to view their life chances as tied up with participation in the range of social institutions based on a common language’ (Kymlicka 1998: 28).

From the outset, the doctrine of cultural pluralism sought to embody the values and ideals of a liberal and humane society such as the ‘equality of respect’, the human dignity of all persons—expressed as a mutual respect for, and understanding of, one another. There was equal regard for every member of society as a human being. Underlying this was the belief that a sense of social/ethnic identity may at least, for the first generation settlers, co-exist with a sense of national identity, of being an *Australian*. Furthermore, in the Whitlam era, ethnic groups were seen as identifiable groups, subject to differential and pejorative treatment by virtue of their minority status. In short, they were cast as ethnic *minority groups* — as interest groups competing with other groups for social rights. Thus, in matters of public policy such as education, the object was to encourage equality of opportunity for the culturally different. What this signified was an inherently *ethnic rights* model of cultural pluralism embedded in the political culture.

This understanding of ‘**egalitarian multiculturalism**’, focusing on equality and social rights, i.e., ‘life chances’, though highly significant in the development of Australian multiculturalism, was short lived and was replaced by a **liberal multiculturalism** in the Fraser era (1975-83). The more conservative Liberal-National Coalition government accepted in principle the policies of the Whitlam Labor government, subject to significant changes in its exposition of cultural pluralism. The new policy paradigm initiated by the Fraser government enshrined the doctrine of cultural pluralism built around notions of *culture* and *ethnicity* rather than minority rights. The understanding of culture and ethnicity in this form of multiculturalism was tilted more towards the symbolic aspects of culture such as an emphasis on cultural maintenance for enhancing self esteem, rather than those pertaining to the satisfaction of the material aspects of living. As a result, in matters of public policy, questions of ‘life-styles’ were more apparent than those dealing with ‘life chances’.

Consequently, this mode of cultural theorising in the discourse of multiculturalism generated an *ethnic/identity* model of multiculturalism which was to become the orthodoxy of Australian multiculturalism (Jakubowicz 1997). The dominant characteristics of this form of culturalist multiculturalism were formulated by its leading

exponents, Frank Galbally and Jerzy Zubrycki, and though subject to some important changes, have remained with us to this day. The four guiding principles of the Galbally Report (Galbally 1978) were: *equality of opportunity, right to maintain and express one's culture, ethno-specific services, self help or voluntarism for migrants*. Subsequently, these were elaborated — by Zubrycki (1982) in terms of four themes— *social cohesion, cultural identity, equal opportunity and access and equal responsibility for participation in society*.

For all intents and purposes, these Galbally-Zubrycki principles constitute the core elements of Australian multiculturalism. This philosophy of cultural pluralism governed the practice of ethnic affairs and migrant welfare as aspects of public policies in the Fraser era, and generated a model of *identity politics* which received bipartisan political endorsement.² Admittedly, there have been some differences of emphasis as in the Hawke-Keating era and also by the Howard government (Jayasuriya 2000) but overall, this 'ethnic identity' model of multiculturalism has remained basically unchanged.

The *National Agenda* of 1989 (re-endorsed in 1995) of the Hawke government with its statement of the eight basic goals of a multicultural society,³ sought to articulate the principles of a democratic citizenship and unifying liberal values of an inclusionary pluralism (Castles 1993; Borowski 2000). The key features of 'liberal multiculturalism' Mk II, as set out in the *National Agenda* (1989) will be found in Appendices B and C. These, when translated in public policy terms, indicate a stronger a commitment to social justice and equity issues than in the earlier Fraser era (OMA 1989). For example, with its political rhetoric of *access and equity*, the *National Agenda* showed a greater willingness to revisit the social justice rationale of the Whitlam era.

However, unlike the egalitarian multiculturalism of the Whitlam era, the Hawke-Keating, *liberal multiculturalism* was stronger on horizontal than vertical equity. This was clearly evident in the influential Jupp Report which, in its exposition of an 'equitable multiculturalism', was focused mainly on equality of treatment and fairness, and not on affirmative action strategies or redistributive justice issues.⁴ Additionally, the Jupp Report, unlike the Galbally Report, focused on ethno-specific services laying greater emphasis on mainstream services for migrants (Jupp 1986).

2 See Appendix A for a summary of the characteristic features of multicultural practice in the Whitlam and Fraser eras.

3 See Appendix C

4 See Appendix D.

Over and above the underlying *identity politics* inherited from the Fraser era, the tenor of these policies was one of a ‘**managerial multiculturalism**’ (Davidson 1997), clearly aligned to the prevailing political culture of economic rationalism. It was officially acknowledged that multiculturalism was essentially ‘a policy for managing the consequences of diversity in the interests of the individual and society’ (Borowski 2000). Accordingly, this new multicultural policy orientation was eager to advocate the virtues of ‘productive diversity’—the emblematic slogan of this era—which was primarily to assist trade and business activity. This formulation of multiculturalism was intended as a ‘productive dividend’ to enhance Australia’s competitive advantage.

Although this denotes a significant change on how multiculturalism was conceptualized as public policy (by utilizing the language of the multicultural discourse to serve the national interests), this attempt to include economic efficiency within the parameters of cultural pluralism presents an unresolved tension between the principles of social justice and cultural pluralism. As Castles (1993) rightly observes, this can be resolved only by empowering the culturally different. Nevertheless, what this recasting of the objectives of multiculturalism does is to provide the first signs of a departure from an understanding of multiculturalism as a philosophy of migrant settlement primarily concerned with catering to migrant welfare needs.

When we come to the Howard *New Agenda* (NMAC 1997; 1999), we find that its policy prescription for **managerial multiculturalism Mk II** only serves to fine tune and reform on the edges of the *National Agenda* of the Hawke-Keating era (Jayasuriya 1998; 2000). This is, indeed, a classic instance of the aphorism, *plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose*! But there are two points of notable difference. Unlike, the Hawke-Keating document, the Howard *New Agenda* is stated not in terms of rights based citizenship, as in the Hawke-Keating era, but in terms of ‘civic duties’ – the mutual obligations and responsibilities of citizens. Additionally, and most importantly, the Howard *New Agenda* for Australian multiculturalism is couched in the language of a ‘new nationalism’. This identifies cultural values of the anglo-celtic heritage, which are those of the dominant groups, in society as the basis of national unity and social cohesion. This is highly reminiscent of Enoch Powell’s vision of the England as an “‘ethnic” nation state’ (Ignatieff 1988).

This new nationalism, like its offshoot of ‘xeno racism’, or *new racism* evident in Hansonism (Jayasuriya 2002a), exaggerates cultural differences and proceeds to emphasize the intrinsic worth of the primordial cultural attributes of the ‘anglo-fragment’, the very sin it accuses other ethnic groups of committing! By implication,

this subscribes to a sense of the nation as being contained within a homogeneous culture derived from its ‘anglo-celtic’ heritage. As a result we have the construction of the ‘nation’ as ‘One Nation’ — (or one Wollestonecraft, as Gerard Henderson (1995) puts it!) — an ‘imagined community’ characterized by the core cultural values of the charter group – the anglo-celts.

The overarching theme of the Howard *New Agenda* is ‘reconciling unity and diversity’ by the simplistic solution of denying the migrant experience, the vibrant pluralism of society, and affirming the homogeneity of the ‘cultural nation’ – the cultural values of the anglo fragment extolled by writers like Miriam Dixon (1999) and John Hirst (2001). This, in many respects, is reminiscent of Henry Parkes’s celebrated slogan—‘One People, One Destiny’—at the time of Federation—the only difference being that British identity is replaced by a new sense of an Australian identity, one constructed in terms of core cultural values reflecting an *ethnic essentialism*.

Multiculturalism Adrift and in Crisis

Until quite recently, this orthodoxy of Australian multiculturalism proved to be an effective and successful policy of migrant settlement for a variety of reasons. First and foremost, it was a state directed policy, a carefully monitored and regulated aspect of public policy which had the endorsement of capital and labour – employer organizations and the unions. Equally important was that these policies were highly responsive to the social and economic context⁵ in which they were nurtured. These policies which originated in the 1960s and early 1970s under conditions of rapid economic growth and full employment, were subsequently nurtured and developed in the Fraser era (1975-83)—a period of relative economic affluence. The effectiveness of these policies was greatly assisted by having the active participation of the new ethnic middle class in the implementation of policy strategies. This co-optation represents alliance between the state and ethnic lobby groups co-opted by governments to promote its agenda of identity politics. It was, above all, central to de-politicizing multiculturalism.

Furthermore, the mainstream groups too were inclined to give this form of ‘cultural multiculturalism’ lukewarm endorsement for two main reasons. One was that these policies were attractive as a highly depoliticised way of managing diversity, affording little occasion for social conflict and disruption. Secondly, and more importantly, there was an expectation that in the long run, differences would disappear and there would be

5 . See Appendix E.

a melting pot. This hidden assimilation was further strengthened by the resurgent new nationalism (Castles 1991; Davidson 1997; Jayasuriya 2000) which held out the prospect of restoring the ruptured ideal of cultural homogeneity by constructing a sense of Australianess, as one commentator put it, based on the famous ‘cricket test’! advocated by the UK Home Secretary, Norman Tebbit.⁶ This was clearly the thrust of the Howard Agenda for Australian multiculturalism, and the conditions under which John Howard embraced the ‘m’ word.

The inclusionary citizenship implicit in the doctrine of cultural pluralism from its origins were made more explicit mainly during the Hawke-Keating era (Castles 1993). It was the tangible benefits newcomers derived from political and social citizenship that made multiculturalism so attractive to new settlers. The inherent fairness of the political and legal institutions, the generosity of the state in guaranteeing new settlers the social benefits of citizenship which accrued from the wage earners’ welfare state (e.g., a minimum level of economic security and a social wage), proved to be a most effective social glue, binding newcomers to Australian society and providing a sense of belonging. This clearly suggests that social solidarity and being recognized as a stakeholder resides in the political culture and not in some set of arbitrary cultural values derived from a historic past or the symbolic affirmation of values such as a fair go or mateship – values so dear to conservative polemicists including John Howard.

Yet, despite the success of this conventional model of multiculturalism, it has been subject to critical scrutiny across the political spectrum and also by the general public. The public perception of the practice of Australian multiculturalism remains confused and shrouded in uncertainty (Markus & Rickfels 1985; DILGEA 1988; Sawyer 1990). Neither is it seen as serving effectively the needs and aspirations of the ethnic minorities, especially in conditions of economic downturn and structural changes to the economy. There is no doubt that Australian multiculturalism is in a state of crisis – a crisis which arises from two main sources. The first lies in the contradictions and tensions inherent in the doctrine of cultural pluralism, and relates to the two distinct but closely linked facets of Australian multiculturalism – the paradox of pluralism and dilemma of universalism; and secondly, the lack of fit between the ideology of multiculturalism derived from the 1980s and the politico-social realities of contemporary Australian society (Jayasuriya 2000).

6 . This is the view that you cannot be accepted as English unless you support England in test matches.

The controversial nature of cultural pluralism as *identity politics*, revolves around the issues of identity and difference. The first concerns the meaning given to the concepts of culture and ethnicity in Australian identity politics. By regarding the concept of culture in essentialist terms (i.e., as an immutable fixed entity) the multicultural discourse has drawn heavily on an idealist/cognitive interpretation of the culture concept – as ‘shared meaning systems’ (Jayasuriya 1992). This viewpoint is steeped in an essentialism, i.e., ‘in terms of ultimate essences that transcend historical and cultural boundaries’, and presents a reified, static, unreal view of culture which fails to capture the lived reality of culture as a form of cultural practice. The latter view entails adopting a more situationally defined view of culture as being located within the complex structures and patterns of social relations, and highly responsive to specific features of one’s location. This inclines one to identifying ethnic groups as status devalued minority groups rather than as cultural groups – a point of view first expressed by Jean Martin (Martin 1978).

In short, what we experience are mixed identities arising from the intersectionality of class, gender, ethnicity/race, creating an entirely different understanding of identity politics. For this reason, ethnic identity is best viewed as a ‘politico-economic resource’ that can be mobilised in the pursuit of group interests. Therefore, once you recognize the contingent nature of identity, it is clear that identities are determined in the political realm – not in the private domain. However, it is the idealist/cognitive understanding of culture that has dominated the Australian multicultural discourse, one promoted as a culturalist multiculturalism. This form of multiculturalism puts a heavy emphasis on the *expressive/affective* dimensions of culture and ethnicity – the need to belong and maintain one’s cultural identity (life styles) as against a concern with the instrumental aspects of ethnicity, i.e., satisfaction of material needs and improvement of life chances.

The privatization of ‘difference’ inherent in this mode of theorizing — with its emphasis on life-styles — has served to marginalise the ‘culturally different’ in the public domain. The disempowerment of the ‘different’ is evident in that the commanding heights of the society – be it the media, the bureaucracy, business or academia – are still inaccessible to the culturally ‘different’, those of ethnic origin. At the same time, this policy orientation has also contributed to a backlash against multiculturalism in the wider community, accusing it of tribalism of breeding cultural

ghettoes, and of diaspora nationalism (i.e., linkages back to home countries), all of which are seen as endangering social cohesion and social solidarity.⁷

This culturalist and life-style approach of multicultural public policies exaggerating cultural ‘difference’, ironically exists alongside a denial of difference arising from a strong insistence on equality difference (e.g., rejection of differential treatment). This narrow rendering of *equality* in terms of *the principle of universalism*, as understood in liberal political philosophy, imposes strict limits on difference or the degree of differentiation (social or structural) that is permissible. It is this which leads to a denial of difference, and lies at the heart of the proverbial *paradox of pluralism* arising from the conjunction of cultural pluralism and the universalism of citizenship.

The dilemma of this form of multicultural discourse is that the sanitized homogeneity arising from the universalism inherent in the politics of cultural pluralism confronts the very difference that it seeks to avoid or minimize (Jayasuriya 1999). In other words, the celebration of culture and ethnic identity promoted by the practice of culturalist multiculturalism, as identity politics, creates the very divisions and structures it seeks to avoid. As we know today, ethnic structures—be they in sport, religion, or the arts—are part and parcel of the social and political reality of the diverse and pluralist society. Yet, these differences are denied, muted, or ignored in order to maintain the equality demanded of a common citizenship.

There is no doubt that we appear to have lost sight of Jean Martin’s perceptive and insightful observation many years ago that there can be no cultural pluralism without some sort of social pluralism (Martin 1971). Hence, we need to devise effective strategies for handling this paradox of pluralism, by accepting the principle of ‘equal but different’. This however, requires first, a willingness to confront diversity, and this is certainly not achieved by denying ‘difference’.

Turning to the *lack of fitness* between the current model of multiculturalism and social reality, we find that this relates to two main factors. First is the unequal impact of the growing inequalities arising from the ravages of economic restructuring and globalisation. Some ethnic groups, particularly those from recent waves of migration, find themselves disenfranchised and powerless – and the culturalist model of multiculturalism gives them little solace. Secondly, the orthodoxy of multiculturalism confronts a new pluralism markedly different to that which prevailed when cultural

7. See *Weekend Australian* (2002); also Blainey (1984).

pluralism first evolved in the late 1970s and 1980s. The new pluralism of contemporary Australian society include new waves of migrants, mostly non-Caucasian groups from Asia, Middle East, and Africa, generational differences, and a hybridity arising from inter-ethnic marriages. Considering generational differences, over 20% of those of ethnic origins, are now classified as belonging to the 2nd and 3rd generations. Therefore, what we observe within these groups is more of a symbolic ethnicity (Gans 1979) in a 'mixed' cultural society, a nostalgic sense of the cultural origins of their parents and/or grandparents, than a maintenance of a historic cultural identity. In addition, there is now a distinct religious pluralism rarely acknowledged in the conventional multicultural discourse (Carey 2003).

Given the shortcomings of multiculturalism and the problematic nature of the doctrine of cultural pluralism, we indeed may have come to the end of the first phase of a bold social experiment which has transformed Australian society. There is no turning back from the reality of the diversity and pluralism of contemporary Australian society. Clearly, the multiculturalism we have practised for over 3 decades cannot any longer be narrowly framed as a philosophy of migrant settlement or migrant welfare. In confronting the diversity and pluralism of society, we have stark choices: *do we continue to shy away from difference or do we face up to the stark reality of Australia as a pluralistic society?*

These choices have a significant bearing on how we consider ourselves as being Australian; and also the conception of the common good, the idea of Australia as a good society. The stereotype of a friendly, laid back, egalitarian Australian is full of contradictions. Being egalitarian or having a sense of 'fair go' as Vance Palmer once stated in his vision of an 'egalitarian democracy', is far more problematic in a diverse plural society. In articulating the values, beliefs and ideals which underline the 'good society' there is no way we can avoid the reality of 'difference'. Indeed, the inescapable fact is that 'culture is not the problem, nor the solution' (Appiah 1997).

A Future Scenario: from Cultural to Democratic Pluralism:

The starting point of any restructuring of multiculturalism or developing a new rationale rests on a) an acceptance of the stark reality of pluralism, and b) a preparedness to build on the positive achievements of cultural pluralism such as equality of respect, mutual understanding, tolerance, and an inclusionary citizenship. What we have today is a pluralistic community which is both 'racial', 'ethnic', and religious in composition, and

this must surely include the Aboriginal people as constituting a defining component element of a pluralistic society. In the words of Hugh Mackay (1999):

we are in the midst of a significant shift in which old and new values are finding ways to co-exist in a genuinely pluralist society ... where we are understanding and coming to terms with what diversity really means.

However defined, the reality we confront is that minority groups — be they racial, religious, cultural or ethnic — are status devalued groups operating in the public domain, but marginalised from the power structures and treated pejoratively. Therefore, in refashioning our understanding of diversity and pluralism we need to move away from the *identity politics* of the past toward a *politics of identity* which views difference in terms of the minority status of ethnic groups as groups who have to contend with inequalities and disadvantage, reminiscent of the late 1960s. This shift entails a move away from a narrowly conceived a-political ‘cultural pluralism’ to a more ‘**democratic pluralism**’ which confronts the problematic nature of what has been described as ‘the tensional nexus of democracy (democratic citizenship) and multiculturalism’ (Jayasuriya 2000).

This form of democratic pluralism is also contingent upon re-negotiating the concept of citizenship, and requires us to go beyond an understanding of citizenship merely as *legal status* embodying rights, civil, political, and social rights. Rather, *citizenship*, should be understood normatively as conferring a distinctive sense of identity, of belonging and enjoying full and equal membership status in a pluralistic community. To this end, the prevailing idea of a common universal citizenship needs to be reframed so as to ensure that the badge of citizenship does not deny or repress multiplicity or difference.

What this more radical liberal understanding of citizenship does is not to just entertain but actively incorporate the notion of ‘difference’ within the meaning of a common citizenship. In short, we need to articulate a conception of ‘*equal but different*’ in citizenship theorising. To this end, a *democratic pluralism* endeavours to recognize ‘difference’ by positing a political and enabling multiculturalism within a framework of citizenship that ‘treats all members as equal and also recognizes their separate identities’ (Taylor 1992). Premised on the existence of a ‘shared political culture’ this allows for a ‘*differentiated citizenship*’ or a multicultural citizenship (Kymlicka 1992; 1995), i.e., one in which ‘differences between types of citizens or groups of citizens need to be recognised and taken into account’ (Hudson 2000).

This more radical citizenship acknowledges the reality of a society differentiated by gender, class, and ethnicity, and allows for differences between individual citizens or a groups of citizens to be recognised and taken account of in catering to citizens' needs. What democratic pluralism strives for is to safeguard and protect the rights of 'minorities' to participate as full and equal members of society. Effectively, what this means is that citizenship needs to acknowledge that when a society is socially differentiated, then citizenship must equally be so.

In adopting the notion of a *differentiated citizenship* or a *multicultural citizenship*, one is forced to specify clearly the nature and scope of the rights enjoyed by distinct groups in society, such as the aged, disabled, and indigenous people. In Australia, the Aboriginal people have rightly been lukewarm and indifferent to the current ideology of multiculturalism which has been framed specifically to cater to the needs and aspirations of immigrant settlers (Fesl 1991; Curthoys 2000). At the same time, immigrant ethnic groups too have, until very recently, failed to recognise and acknowledge the special status of Aboriginal people and promote their concerns. There is no doubt that the theory and practice of Australian multiculturalism masks the exclusion and oppression of Aboriginal Australians. A meaningful convergence between the indigenous Aboriginal and multicultural discourse is imperative if we are to move forward.

In this regard, the acceptance of the concept of a *differentiated citizenship* is critical if we are to incorporate the Aboriginal with the multicultural discourse. This of course, requires the recognition of different kinds of rights, and this immediately raises the complex question of *collective* vs. *individual* rights. Following Kymlicka (1995) and others, it maybe argued that the justification for collective rights stems from the liberal concept of the autonomy of the individual, which cannot be divorced from an individual's immersion within a stated group; in short, individual identities co-exist with collective identities (Habermas 1967). But more importantly, as Kymlikca (1995; 1996) points out, any theory of collective rights has to acknowledge that there are different kinds of difference; hence, the existence of different kinds of rights.

According to Kymlicka (1996), non indigenous ethnic minorities (e.g. immigrant minorities) do not have claims to such rights as cultural rights because these groups have made a voluntary choice to leave their homelands and settle elsewhere, and for this reason, they have no defensible claim to establish their homeland cultures in their new environment. By contrast, indigenous minority groups such as the Aboriginal people,

have a stronger claim to the right to maintain and safeguard their cultural heritage as an essential component of their right to self determination.

A pluralistic view of citizenship which underpins multiculturalism as a democratic pluralism, by allowing minority groups to participate fully and exercise their rights in the broad civic domain, facilitates social integration by cementing the common bonds of citizenship within a political community and a liberal political culture. In short, a 'differentiated citizenship', extends and enhances the conventional liberal individualist model by redefining the nature of the political community to include 'difference'. For this reason, *participation*, and *representation* or *recognition* or *presence* are central to a pluralistic citizenship. It is these qualities which enhance the status of citizenship and strengthen one's membership and belonging to a *political community*, which is markedly diverse and plural.

A radical view of citizenship, incorporating a differentiated citizenship, flows from the *political* rather than the *cultural* nation. What is therefore crucial for social solidarity and social integration in a pluralistic society committed to a liberal political culture is the belonging to, and identification with, the *political* nation conceived of as a 'self governing' *political* and *moral* community, and not a *cultural* nation derived from core cultural values of a single unifying ethnic core of the dominant groups in society (Jayasuriya 2000).

Underlying the 'political nation' are norms and practices of a political culture which include democratic political institutions and the values of political liberalism, of freedom and autonomy. What we all share and belong to is more in the public and 'political culture' of the nation than in some mythical set of core values derived from a historic past, customarily associated with a 'cultural nation'. What is critical therefore, for national identity and social solidarity in a pluralistic society committed to liberal political values is the *political nation* and not the cultural nation.

This difference in how we constitute the Australian nation may be summarised by contrasting the vision of identity in the Howard era — as deriving from the anglo celtic heritage —and the Hawke Keating era in terms of our being a uniquely Australian nation; one which is geographically located out of the western orbit but with a distinctive political culture. The contrast is between an 'ethnic nationalism' based on core anglo-celtic values and a 'civic nationalism'. The latter refers to the civic culture based on an attachment to democratic political values and social institutions (Ignatieff 1993). In other words, for those who do not share the Howard vision, the real basis of

unity, social cohesion, and social solidarity rests on an identity which derives from an acceptance and identification of a common set of social and political institutions, not shared values – a mythical set of core cultural values (Kymlicka 1996).

In the light of the foregoing, and bearing in mind the strengths (e.g., equality of respect) and weaknesses (e.g., denial of ‘difference’ in the public domain) of the earlier models of multiculturalism, the WA Charter of Multiculturalism represents a significant departure from conventional theorizing.⁸ The WA Charter sponsored by the Gallop Labor government in WA, endeavours to refine and revitalize the spirit and purpose of Australian multiculturalism, viz., to achieve social harmony and social cohesion with justice and equity for all its citizens. To this end, and with a view to restoring greater public confidence, including that of ethnic minorities in the social ideal of multiculturalism, the WA Charter endeavours to overcome two of the main shortcomings of cultural pluralism, namely, *identity politics* and *marginalisation* of the culturally different in the public domain.

The WA Charter is based on 4 key principles (Civic Ideals, Fairness, Equality, Participation), and proposes an *inclusive multiculturalism* or a *civic multiculturalism*. This has a fourfold purpose, viz. to include the distinctive Aboriginal identity within the multicultural discourse, promote social integration, acknowledge difference via the notion of a ‘differentiated citizenship’, and to empower citizen participation. A key element of the Charter is that it espouses the principles and ideals of a *democratic pluralism* based on a redefined and revitalised sense of Australian citizenship. This reconceptualizing of citizenship extends the meaning and understanding of citizenship beyond that of a legal status ordering the relationship of the individual to the state.

The Charter is clearly cast within a radical framework of citizenship rights, inclusive of political and social citizenship, and a differentiated citizenship. What the Charter endeavours to achieve normatively is to bestow full and equal membership status within a political community characterized by differences of ethnicity, race, age, or disability, and these are explicitly recognized in the full participation of all its members. This, however, does not in any way diminish the fact that all citizens, by virtue of their common citizenship, enjoy a sense of shared belonging by virtue of embracing civic virtues such as democratic spirit of tolerance, the rule of law, respect for liberty, etc. (cf. 4 key principles of Charter).

8. See Appendix F.

The spirit of the WA Charter as a democratic pluralism lies in embodying the *politics of difference*, or the *politics of recognition* within the context of a liberal democracy. The principles of the Charter embodies the condition of society in which the equality of rights and equality of respect bestowed on, and enjoyed by, its citizens as full and equal members of the political community also makes room for particularity and difference. It is this *civic culture*, arising from a liberal political order, which provides the bond and glue that binds the nation and integrates varied segments of society.

Clearly, if as we have argued, the unity and cohesion of society rests in the political consensus and the common possession of rights and entitlements associated with full and equal membership of the political community. What matters is the *political nation*, and not the *cultural nation* (Jayasuriya 1991). Unity and social solidarity are taken from the common language of political discourse and the agreed meanings and understanding of the civic culture, and not a homogeneous common set of cultural values.

It is in this context that a constitutional document, embodying the aspiration of ‘we the people’ as a pluralistic society, acquires crucial significance in forging social solidarity and constructing our identity as a nation (Jayasuriya 2003). The constitutional document is what is most likely to give legitimacy and credibility to a sense of Australian identity, as a distinct nation in a pluralistic society; and at the same time it is a document that binds citizens in a common belonging through the principles and values enshrined in the constitution. We need, as a matter of priority, to have an ‘Australian conversation’ to reorder the political foundations of Australia as a pluralistic society, governed by a rights-based democracy and committed to liberal political values. As the Premier of WA, Dr Geoff Gallop observed in his recent Walter Murdoch Address, entitled *Living with Difference*:

Australia has the opportunity to show the rest of the regions that it is possible to have a robust democratic civic culture that at the same time respects and values religion and cultural pluralism.

This must serve to articulate a new Charter for Australian multiculturalism as a ‘plural society ... held together and legitimated by a common understanding of a citizenship’ (Miller 1995). There is, indeed, a compelling case for devising constitutional ways and means for incorporating the rights element in the Australian political culture as a means of safeguarding and protecting the rights and freedoms of minorities (Charlesworth 1994). This needs to be strengthened by giving political legitimacy to a pluralistic citizenship and inscribing it in statutory form via a *Bill of Rights* or an Australian Charter of Rights (Williams 2001). This will serve to include both indigenous and non-

indigenous groups in the multicultural discourse, and facilitate the separate, but linked, development of an Aboriginal and a multiculturalism consciousness.

Australian multiculturalism, as an integral and defining aspect of the Australian nation needs to be embodied in a legislative statute, and this is best accompanied via a Bill of Rights inscribing a radical new ideal of a pluralistic citizenship (Jayasuriya 2002b). As the late Jean Martin concluded from her pathfinding research many decades ago, if Australian 'pluralism is to be more than a cardboard façade [it is] to be acknowledged as a potential political force [and it needs to assume] some kind of political responsibility and make their experience forcefully relevant at the level of political decision making' (Martin 1972).

To this end, the language of public discourse will need to seek ways of incorporating a more 'robust pluralism' (Bottomley 1998) within the whole spectrum of its institutions, with a range of new and different social forms, images, and styles of conduct. The citizenship ideal, despite the complexity and difficulties associated with it, still remains the road to traverse to meet the challenges of inclusion in a pluralistic society bound by democratic liberal values.

APPENDIX

Sources:

- Appendix A, B, E: CRAIMA (1983) Vol 2
M. Lopez (2001)
A. Jamrozik et al. (1995) Chapter 5
- Appendix C: OMA (1989)
- Appendix D: Jupp (1980)
- Appendix F: OMI (2003)

Appendix A: Migrant Settlement & Multiculturalism as Commonwealth Public Policy, 1945-1982

GOVT. & FORM OF MULTICULTURALISM	SOCIAL & ECONOMIC CONTEXT	MAIN FEATURES OF PUBLIC POLICIES OF MIGRANT SETTLEMENT	KEY PROGRAMS, SERVICES & LEGISLATION	GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES, ADVISORY BODIES, REPORTS, AND INQUIRIES
1945-72 Pre Multicultural era 1945-49 Labor 1949-72 Liberal/National Menzies era Anglo Conformity	- Post war economic expansion and 'Long Boom' - Growth of industry - Full employment and growing affluence - Post WW II migration, mainly European migration	- Recruitment and settlement policies - Assimilationism – 1945-64 - Integration – 1964-72 - Aliens and citizens	1958: <i>Migration Act</i> – amended 1964 1959: <i>Nationality & Citizenship Act</i> – amended 1967, 1969 1971: Immigration Education Act - Migration Education Services - CMEP, AMES - C'wealth Hostels - Migrant welfare services	- Dept of Immigration, 1945 - Borrie Report 1971 - Immigration Advisory Council (IAC) – several Reports - Good Neighbour Councils (GNCs) - Citizenship Conventions
1972-75 Egalitarian Multiculturalism Labor Whitlam era Equality & Ethnic Rights	- Economic restructuring - Social disparities leading to Poverty Inquiry - New middle class - Changes to migration and increased intake of non European migrants - Growth of welfare state - Social reformism	- Dismantling of White Australia policy - Ethno/cultural pluralism as minority rights - Social rights & disadvantage - Family of the Nation (Grassby) - Legislation on Racial Discrimination - Enhancing Australian citizenship status	- Migrant education programs - Settlement services for newcomers - Ethnic Radio <i>States Grants Act</i> 1976 <i>Racial Discrimination Act</i> 1975 - Transfer of migrant welfare to Dept. of Labour	- IAC disbanded - Dept of Education (CMEP) - Australian Population and Immigration Council (APIC) - Migrant Task Forces - Committee on Community Relations (Lippman Committee) - Karnel Report (Schools Commission) - Coombs Report (Administration) - Mather Report (Language) - Jackson Report (Industry)
1975-82 Liberal Multiculturalism Liberal/National Coalition Fraser era Culture Pluralism & Identity Politics	- Changing economy - Decline of manufacturing industries - Rise in unemployment - Privatisation - New Federalism - Cutbacks to public sector - Refugee intake adds to migration levels – peak in 1983	- Identity politics – culture, ethnicity and identity - Welfare needs and ethno specific services - Refugee services	- Grant-in-Aid Scheme - Migrant Resource Centres - Telephone Interpreter Services (TIS) - Multicultural education program, e.g., Saturday school <i>Broadcast and TV Act</i> 1977 (SBS Radio) - Ethnic TV - 1980 - NAAATI – 1977 <i>AIMA Act</i> 1979	- Bailey Report 1976 - Galbally Report 1978 - Zubryeski Report 1982 - Norgaard Report 1976 - National Ethnic Broadcasting Advisory Council (NEBAC) 1977 - Australian Council of Population and Ethnic Affairs (ACPEA) 1981. (Incorporates APIC 1974, AEAC 1977 and Refugee Council 1979)

Appendix B: Migrant Settlement & Multiculturalism as Commonwealth Public Policy 1983-2003

GOVT. & FORM OF MULTICULTURALISM	SOCIAL & ECONOMIC CONTEXT	MAIN FEATURES OF PUBLIC POLICIES OF MIGRANT SETTLEMENT	KEY PROGRAMS, SERVICES & LEGISLATION	GOVERNMENT - ADVISORY BODIES, REPORTS AND INQUIRIES
1983-96 Managerial Multiculturalism (I) Labor Hawke-Keating era <i>Citizenship Phase</i>	- Economic recovery after recession - Structural adjustment policies - Market deregulation; growth of service sector - Policies of Asian Engagement - Welfare cut backs - Criticism of multiculturalism and Asian migration. - Blainey (1984) Howard (1988) - Attacks on migration levels (1984-88) – fall in migration intake - Recession of 1989 growing unemployment - Dominance of economic rationalism	<i>National Agenda</i> Mk 1, 1989; Mk 2 1995. - Principles: Cultural identity, social justice and economic efficiency - Citizenship and pluralism - Access and equity programs - Mainstreaming policies; support community based agencies - Restructuring of settlement services; equitable multiculturalism - Withdrawal from advocacy role and long term service provision	- Access and Equity strategies in health and welfare - National Integrated Settlement Strategy - Policies for ethnic aged - Ethnic entrepreneurship and productivity - Cross cultural training <i>Living in Harmony</i> and community relations <i>HREOC Act</i> 1986 - Detention Centres, 1991 - Amendment to <i>Australian Citizenship Act</i> <i>Racial Hatred Act</i> 1995	- CRAIMA Report 1983 - NACCME Report, 1984 - National Population Council, 1985 - Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) 1987 - Bureau of Immigration Research (BIR) later BIMPR 1984 - Settlement Advisory Council (1992) - National Multicultural Advisory Council (NMAC) 1987 - Jupp Report 1986 (ROMAMPAS) - Lo Bianco Report 1987 - Fitzgerald Report 1988 (CAAIP)
1996- Managerial Multiculturalism (II) Liberal/National Coalition Howard era <i>Nationalism Phase</i>	- Growth despite economic crisis - GST - Border protection and security & Exclusion - Hansonism - Coalition of Willing - Deputy Sheriff mantle - Increased skilled labour migration - Mutual obligation in welfare policies	<i>Way Forward</i> – NMAC 1999 - Principles: Civic duties, cultural respect & social equity - Productivity Diversity - Cultural diversity and Australian heritage ‘Australian’ multiculturalism - the ‘m’ word and ‘One Australia’	<i>Tampa</i> and Refugee issues - Exclusionary Legislation <i>Border Protection Act</i> 1999	- BIMPR and OMA disbanded 1996 - NMAC – 1997-99 - Council of Multicultural Australia 2000 - Refugee Advisory Council

Appendix C

National Agenda 1989 (Chair, NMAC: Sir James Gobbo)

1. *All Australians should have a commitment to Australia and share responsibility . for furthering our national interests.*
2. All Australians should be able to enjoy the basic right of freedom from discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, or culture.
3. All Australians should enjoy equal life chances and have equitable access to an equitable share of the resources which governments manage on behalf of the community.
4. All Australian should have the opportunity fully to participate in society and in the decisions which directly affect them
5. All Australians should be able to develop and make use of their potential for Australia's economic and social development.
6. All Australians should have the opportunity to acquire and develop proficiency in English, languages other than English, and to develop cross-cultural understanding.
7. All Australians should, if they choose, be able to develop and share their cultural heritage
8. Australian institutions should acknowledge, reflect and respond to the cultural diversity of the Australian community.

Appendix D

ROMAMPAS 4 Principles 1986 – *Jupp Report*

1. All members of the Australian community should have an equitable opportunity to participate in the economic, social, cultural, and political life of the nation;
2. All members of the Australian community should have equitable access to and an equitable share of the resources which governments manage on behalf of the community;
3. All members of the Australian community should have an opportunity to participate in and influence the designed operation of the government policies, programs and services; and
4. All members of the Australian community should have the right, within the law, to enjoy their own culture, to practise their own religion, and to use their own language, and should respect the rights of others to their own culture, religion, and language.

Summarised as:

1. Equitable opportunity of all Australian to participate
2. Equitable access to and equitable share of Resources.
3. Opportunity to participate in and influence decision making and operation of policies, programs and services.
4. Right to enjoy their own culture within the law, and mutual respect for the other's culture.

Appendix E:

Multiculturalism as Commonwealth Public Policy: the Social and Economic Context

GOVERNMENT	THE SOCIAL & ECONOMIC CONTEXT	MULTICULTURAL IDEOLOGY
1945-46: Labor 1950-71: Liberal/National Coalition	• Post war economic expansion and ‘Long Boom’ • Growth of industry • Full employment and growing affluence • Post WW II migration, mainly European migration	Pre Multicultural <i>Anglo conformist</i>
1972-75: Labor	• Economic restructuring and social reformist policies • Social disparities leading to Poverty Inquiry • New middle class, and growth of welfare • Changes to migration intake; non European migration	Egalitarian Multiculturalism <i>Equality and Ethnic Rights</i>
1975-82 Liberal/National Coalition	• Changing economy; decline of manufacturing industries • Rise in unemployment • Privatisation; cutbacks to public sector • New Federalism • Refugee intake; migration levels – peak in 1983	Liberal Multiculturalism <i>Culture Pluralism & Identity Politics</i>
1983-96 Labor	• Economic recovery after recession • Dominance of economic rationalism • Structural adjustment policies; market deregulation • Criticism of multiculturalism and Asian migration. • Attacks on migration levels (1984-88) – fall in migration intake • Recession of 1989 growing unemployment; welfare cutbacks	Managerial Multiculturalism Phase 1: <i>Citizenship & Inclusionary Pluralism</i>
1996- Liberal/National Coalition	• Growth despite economic crisis • GST; curtailed social expenditure; mutual obligation in welfare • Increased skilled labour migration • Border protection and security & Exclusion - Hansonism	Managerial Multiculturalism Phase II: <i>Nationalism & Cultural Heritage</i>

Appendix F: WA Draft Charter of Multiculturalism

PRINCIPLES

1 - Civic Values

The equality of respect, mutual respect, individual freedom and dignity for all members of society subject to the acceptance of the rule of law, social, political and legal institutions and constitutional structures.

2 - Fairness

The pursuit of public policies free of prejudice, discrimination and exclusion on the basis of characteristics such as origins, perceived 'race', culture, religion, ethnicity and nationality.

3 - Equality

Equality of opportunity for all members of society to achieve their full potential in a free and democratic society where every individual is equal before, and under, the law.

4 - Participation

The full and equitable participation in society of individuals and communities, irrespective of origins, perceived 'race', culture, religion, ethnicity and nationality.

Objectives

Pursuant to the above principles the objectives of the Government of Western Australia are to:

- Facilitate the inclusion and empowerment of members of all communities as full and equal members of the Australian community, enjoying the rights and duties of a shared citizenship.
- Encourage a sense of Australian identity and belonging as citizens, within a multicultural society.
- Ensure that all individuals and minority groups, recognising the unique status of Aboriginal peoples, receive equal treatment and protection under the law.
- Enable the recognition and appreciation of the diverse cultures and backgrounds from which members of the Western Australian community are drawn.
- Remove all barriers to equal participation in, and enjoyment of, all aspects of society - social, political, cultural and economic.
- Foster the recognition of the achievements of, and contributions to, the Western Australian community of all individuals regardless of their origins, perceived 'race', culture, religion and nationality.

Principle 1 *asserts that all individuals, irrespective of their ethnicity, race or religious beliefs, recognise that they live within the legal norms of Western Australia and Australia.*

Principle 2 *emphasises the accessibility of government programs, services and products to people of diverse cultures. It means seeking to ensure that services are culturally sensitive and, where appropriate, in a language other than English.*

Principle 3 *means that all individuals are equal before the law. While this seems to be a simple concept, there are several different aspects to equality. Equality means that in order for all to have the same opportunities to participate in public life, to work and to be heard, some will be treated differently.*

Principle 4 *facilitates access to all aspects of public life through education and government programs, by all people in WA.*

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